

**ST. MARY'S COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' MEETING
CHESEAPEAKE BUILDING
Tuesday, April 21, 2009**

Present: Commissioner President Francis Jack Russell
Commissioner Kenneth R. Dement
Commissioner Lawrence D. Jarboe
Commissioner Thomas A. Mattingly, Sr.
Commissioner Daniel H. Raley
John Savich, County Administrator
Betty Jean Pasko, Sr. Administrative Coordinator (Recorder)

CALL TO ORDER

Commissioner President Russell called the meeting to order at 9:03 AM.

APPROVAL OF CHECK REGISTER

Commissioner Mattingly moved, seconded by Commissioner Raley, to authorize the Commissioner President to sign the Check Register for checks dated April 21, 2009, as presented. Motion carried 5-0.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Mattingly moved, seconded by Commissioner Jarboe, to adopt the minutes of the Commissioners' meeting of Tuesday, April 7, 2009, as corrected. Motion carried 5-0.

PROCLAMATIONS

Proclamations were presented in recognition of the following:

- Fair Housing Month
- National Volunteer Week (April 19 – 25, 2009)

**COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR AND SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS:
FOLLOW UP TO ELMS ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT PRESENTED ON
MARCH 31, 2009**

Present: John Savich, County Administrator
Dr. Michael Martirano, Superintendent, St. Mary's County Public Schools

As a follow-up to the March 31, 2009, Elms Advisory Committee Report, the BOCC directed staff to work with a smaller group to develop a compromise proposal that ensures student safety, supports the environmental education program, and respects the rights of hunters.

Dr. Martirano presented a recommendation that he described as being substantially different than what was presented at the March 31st meeting. Rather than designating 13 acres at the north end of the County-leased area for hunting, the new recommendation retains that property for educational use and designates approximately 85 acres at the south end of the property for bow hunting.

The Elms property consists of 1,020 acres total. Of that, 476 acres are leased to the County and are being used for environmental education and recreation. The remaining 544 acres, where hunting is allowed, are maintained by DNR Wildlife & Heritage. The new proposal decreases the acreage allocated for environmental education by 85 acres; increasing the total acreage available for hunting to 629. There is a 150 foot buffer around the environmental education center area.

The County leases the Elms property and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) owns it. Four years ago the County entered into a 25-year lease agreement. In accordance with the lease, both the County and the State must mutually agree on the designated uses of the property (including any property use changes). Within the DNR, there are two agencies involved; i.e., the power plant siting group and the wildlife and heritage group.

Mr. Savich said the new proposal is being reviewed internally by DNR and that he has been in contact with Dr. Peter Dunbar, Power Plant Citing Chief, and Mr. Paul Peditto, Wildlife and Heritage Chief. Although the official response is forthcoming, the provision that only bow hunting will be permitted on the designated 85 acres of the County-leased area has received a positive reaction from DNR.

Mr. Savich advocated continuing to process the new recommendation, including developing a wildlife management agreement with DNR and an agreement with the Board of Education to delineate the acreage and uses of the property.

It was clarified that there were no discussions with the Health Department regarding Lyme disease on the property.

Commissioner Jarboe presented an optional proposal (a copy was presented to the Board), stated in the form of a motion.

Commissioner Jarboe moved, seconded by Commissioner Dement, to resolve the Elms Property issue by dividing the land into two separate parcels with 100% environmental education use on the 200+ acres on the Chesapeake Bay side. Public hunting can be permitted on the inland 200+ acres during hunting season. The rest

of the year, which is about two-thirds of the time, environmental education trips can take place. The Board of Education is very capable of scheduling these events.

The Board of Education can establish a reasonable buffer on their side to protect the children, while the hunters can establish a reasonable area on their side that will only allow tree stand archery which has a limited range.

If DNR is not willing to manage the additional land for hunting, an RFP (*request for proposal*) can be issued to solicit a hunter/outdoor education organization like the Southern Maryland Izaak Walton League or Ducks Unlimited to manage the property. The Southern Maryland Izaak Walton League Association has an excellent record of balancing outdoor education with managed hunting on their 141-acre property in Charles County. At a recent meeting, they expressed interest in adopting this responsibility for the Elms hunting area.

With the likelihood of a liquefied nature gas plant coming to the State-owned property, there may be no land there in the future for the educational and recreational sport of hunting on the land other than the County-leased 476 acre parcel.

Without finding a logical compromise where deer management and environmental education can co-exist, we will be dooming many of our children to the increased threat of lyme disease.

That would be a terrible way to treat our children. Motion failed 2-3.

Commissioners Russell, Raley, and Mattingly voted nay.

Commissioner Mattingly moved, seconded by Commissioner Raley, to direct staff to proceed to develop an agreement with the Board of Education reducing the available acreage on the Elms property for the Environmental Education Center by 85 acres and to develop a wildlife management agreement with the Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources for management of hunting on the 85-acre portion on the property. **Motion carried 3-2.** Commissioners Jarboe and Dement voted nay.

INVITATION TO THE 16TH ANNUAL MARCEY HOUSE BENEFIT GOLF TOURNAMENT

Present: Daniel Slade, President, Marcey House Board of Directors
Larry Harvey, Director, Marcey House

The Marcey House 16th Annual Golf Tournament will be Friday, May 22, 2009, at the Wicomico Shores Municipal Golf Course. Proceeds will go to Marcey House for individuals recovering from drug addiction.

INVITATION TO CHRISTMAS IN APRIL

Present: Mary Ann Chasen, Executive Director, Christmas in April * St. Mary's
Howard Thompson, President, Board of Directors

Ms. Chasen and Mr. Thompson announced the 19th year for the Christmas in April program for St. Mary's County scheduled for April 25, 2009. Over the years, 542 homes have been repaired in the County. 22 homes are scheduled for repairs this year.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

1. Draft Agendas for April 28 and May 5, 2009

2. **Office of the Sheriff**

The Police Protection State Aid Report for FY 2008 Actual Expenditures and FY 09 Estimated Expenditures was deferred to next week's meeting; i.e., April 28, 2009.

3. **Dept. of Recreation and Parks** (*Phil Rollins, Director*)

Commissioner Mattingly moved, seconded by Commissioner Jarboe, to approve and authorize the Commissioner President to sign the Budget Amendment closing out the Recreation Facility Improvement Project, #RP0903, and transferring \$140 to the FIN09 account. Motion carried 5-0.

4. **Department of Public Works and Transportation** (*John Groeger, Deputy Director*)

Commissioner Mattingly moved, seconded by Commissioner Dement, to accept the report provided by the Department of Public Works and Transportation; Items A through D. Motion carried 5-0.

Motion specifically pertains to the following:

- A. Public Works Agreement for Continued Maintenance and Repair for St. Jerome's Crossroads Subdivision located in the **1st Election District** with an Expiration Date of March 1, 2010; and Resolutions accepting Dan Court and Ellyn Court into the maintenance system and posting a 25-mph speed limit and stop signs.
- B. Public Works Agreement Addendum for Ben Oaks Subdivision, Phases 1, 2 3 & 4, located in the **5th Election District** with an Expiration Date of May 1, 2010.
The roads included in this Agreement are: Ben Oaks Drive (8,963'), Yanak Court (658'), Tom Rose Court (779'), and Claire Drive (3,714').
- C. Public Works Agreement Addendum for Forest Knolls Two Subdivision located in the **4th Election District** with an Expiration Date of March 1, 2010. *The road included in this Agreement is: Delibera Court (40').*
- D. Public Works Agreement for Continued Maintenance and Repair for Greenbrier Subdivision, Section 5, located in the **8th Election District** with an Expiration Date of April 1, 2010.

The roads included in this Agreement are: Freedom Drive (1,280'), Green Leaf Road (672'), Green Leaf Court (589'), Powhatan Court (237'), and Brookstone Court (311').

DEPT. OF FINANCE: DECISION ON REQUEST FOR SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION IN THE AMOUNT OF \$99,561 FOR THE WICOMICO SHORES GOLF COURSE

Present: Elaine Kramer, CFO
Phil Rollins, Dir., Dept. of Recreation and Parks

An Ordinance (No. 2009-02) and related Budget Amendment were presented for BOCC approval. The public hearing was held on March 31, 2009. There was one speaker at the public hearing. No additional written comments were received during the open record period.

The request realigns revenues; i.e., increases revenues for the restaurant facility and decreases revenues related to the course, and increases expenses related to the restaurant using fund balance accumulated by the Wicomico Enterprise fund.

Commissioner Mattingly moved, seconded by Commissioner Raley, to approve and sign the proposed Ordinance No. 2009-02 to add \$99,561 to the Dept. of Recreation and Parks FY 2009 Budget for Wicomico Shores Golf Course Enterprise Fund; and to approve and authorize the Commissioner President to sign the Budget Amendment in the amount of \$69,450 as authorized by Ordinance No. 2009-02. Motion carried 4-1. Commissioner Jarboe voted nay.

COMMISSIONERS' TIME

The Commissioners highlighted upcoming events, events attended over the past week and personal interest items.

RECESS

The Board recessed at 10:45AM.

PUBLIC HEARINGS ON THE ST. MARY'S COUNTY RECOMMENDED FY 2010 BUDGET AND CONSTANT YIELD TAX RATE - HELD AT CHOPTICON HIGH SCHOOL, 25390 COLTON POINT RD., MORGANZA, MD

Present: John Savich, County Administrator
Elaine Kramer, Chief Financial Officer
L. Jeannett Cudmore, Deputy Finance Director
Betty Jean Pasko and Donna Gebicke, Records

Commissioner President Russell provided welcoming remarks and commented on the budget process to date. Ms. Kramer stated that notice of the evening's public hearings was published in the Enterprise newspaper on April 10, 2009, final adoption of the FY 2010 Budget is scheduled for May 26, 2009, and any additional written comments relative to the FY 2010 Budget and the Constant Yield Tax Rate must be submitted by May 1, 2009.

Constant Yield Property Tax Rate -- Proposed Real Property Tax Increase

Ms. Kramer, Chief Financial Officer presented the Board of County Commissioners' proposal to increase real property taxes. For the tax year beginning July 1, 2009, the estimated real property assessable base will increase by 7.4%, from \$9,416,413,771, to \$10,109,769,194. If St. Mary's County maintains the current tax rate of \$.857 per \$100 of assessment, real property tax revenues will increase by 7.4%, resulting in \$5,942,056 of new real property tax revenues. In order to fully offset the effect of increasing assessments, the real property tax rate should be reduced to \$.798, the constant yield tax rate. The County is considering not reducing its real property tax rate enough to fully offset increasing assessments. The County proposes to adopt a real property tax rate of \$.857 per \$100 of assessment.

Recommended FY 2010 Budget

Ms. Kramer provided an overview of the Recommended FY 2010 Budget. The recommended general fund/operating budget for FY 2010 is \$200,391,552, which is a decrease of \$2,207,372 from FY 2009 to FY 2010. The net increase in revenues is 2.7% or \$5.2m. Property tax, income tax and energy tax rates are proposed to remain the same as the previous year.

PUBLIC HEARING ON THE CONSTANT YIELD PROPERTY TAX RATE -- PROPOSED REAL PROPERTY TAX INCREASE

The public hearing on the Constant Yield Tax Rate was opened for public comment at 7:16 pm and moderated by John Savich, County Administrator. The following is a summary of each public comment presented (comments are not recorded verbatim).

Elfreda Mathis, 45811 Delegate Court, Great Mills

Issue: Constant Yield (CY). You lose \$5.8m in revenues if CY is followed. I want to know where would we make cuts? What is the plan to reduce the budget and what would you (the audience) cut from the plan? Some will say we won't lose anything - - just go ahead and spend the surplus money and we'll just deal with it next year. We have the 6th lowest tax rate in Maryland and the 4th top educational system. You managed to have a top-rated education system, while planning for the future. We have also maintained a very good bond rating. All of this came about because you managed the present while you were planning for the future. This takes hard work. We used our surplus to pay down debt. We are lucky to have a rainy day fund to absorb any cuts in basic services. Budget cuts

of \$4m – add \$6m in CY, and where are we? You want more money? I think we should look to Calvert Cliffs and what money is coming over there for the big plume that is going to blow over St. Mary's County. We already have plans to absorb the lower half of Calvert if a crisis occurs. Money should come from them to help us prepare for a crisis if it happens.

William Callaway, 17585 Whitestone Dr., Tall Timbers

Property tax should be reduced. The economy is not healthy. Property tax has increased more than 5-6% in the last two years. My house is not worth any more, but they want more money. My commercial properties were 100% rented last year - - of the 15, 8 are now rented, one pays only ½ the rent, and two others are behind. Meanwhile, the assessor keeps jacking up the assessment. They look at comparables - - what did a comparable property sell for 2-3 years ago. This is not what property is worth now. How are we supposed to pay taxes when rents aren't coming in. Ms. Kramer has done a good job. We can't take any more increases in tax rates.

Michael Hewitt, 26074 Sotterley Heights Rd., Hollywood

Hold the CY. It's not only the economic conditions. The real problem as I see it is - - are the budget numbers the truth? The point is -- they're not the truth. They're disingenuous, they're crafty, and they're sneaky. Over the last five years, according to your audited budget you have under estimated your revenues by \$40m and over estimated expenses by over \$16m. One year may be an aberration, 2 might be a glitch, 5 years is a trend. You have consistently under estimated revenues and over estimated expenses. Last year you under estimated property taxes by \$7m. If you can tighten up the variables you use to do these projections, you can take the heat off of us. The Commissioners have said they can't provide services to the community without increasing taxes. We have seen the chart that talks to cuts that have to be made in areas very dear to all of us. I fully support fully funding the education budget. You go through the year . . . showing \$11.1m fund balance. According to page 78 of that audited budget it was \$24,858,000. You paid \$5.3m for a property valued at \$4m. You have told us the property values are coming back -- like the crabs and oysters - - but who sees evidence of that? Later on in December of January when you come up with the final draft of the audited budget you'll be cheering each other for the big surplus while all of us will be pulling our belts tighter.

Reggie Townsend, 46475 Dennis Point Way, Drayden

I'm retired, living on a fixed income that is tied to the economy. An increase in taxes won't work out well for me. I spent 30 years in heavy construction - - big projects around the world -- and I have a good idea of how large amounts of money are spent and managed. While I don't advocate cutting services, perhaps services are not being done wisely and money is being wasted, such as paving and re-paving the same roads. We don't need gold-plated buildings. A line item at the top of page 21 makes me uneasy: "Other Instructional Costs" – shows an

increase of \$2.5m over 2009. What are “other instructional costs?” I’d like to know what that is.

Mary G. Bailey, 23538 Hollywood Rd., Leonardtown

I support the CY tax rate. If we don’t have it, tax assessment goes up and our property taxes will also go up. It’s important for the County, we need it that way. We need only one rate -- the CY.

Carolyn Guy (*waived her opportunity to speak*)

Sarah Guy, P.O. Box 499, Mechanicsville

I’m a real estate agent speaking on behalf of a client who is a first-time buyer. Her mortgage, insurance and interest on the purchase of a \$135-140,000 property will be \$900 per month. The property tax rate will add another \$270 to her monthly payment - - or 31% per month. Please do something about the tax rates to help first-time buyers afford their mortgage.

Stephen Willing (asked to defer his time to later in the evening)

Cindy Jones, 46241 Usher Lane, Valley Lee

Speaking on behalf of the CY. I learned as a student of economics that government is inherently not very efficient. To increase property taxes on people who pay them in this economic time is a bad practice. It makes it difficult to take care of elderly family members, educate children, etc. I ask that department heads go back and cut more from their budgets. Yielding the CY tax rate doesn’t necessarily mean cutting services. There is still fat that can be trimmed. If the county is willing to take another look at trimming these things, it goes a long way toward easing concerns about raising property taxes. We’re asking you to cut a little under \$6m, and with a total operating fund recommended for 2010 of \$337,879,087, \$6m is not that much when you put it in the big picture.

Glen Weder, 44462 Clarkes Landing Rd., Hollywood

I attended last year’s budget public hearing. The impression I received was that the tax rate would be temporary for 2009 until more was known about the state’s ability to contribute to various county budgets. Once again you are proposing to increase taxes. The federal government is bailing out the private sector on the backs of hard working individuals. Stop increasing the property tax rates and return to a CY. We have an excellent bond rating. Live within the county’s means. Act responsibly. This is not the time to increase taxes even more for people struggling to make ends meet. If the Board of Education (BOE) can submit a general operating budget that is lower despite adding another school, why can’t the Commissioners hold the line on taxes. Have you considered that this is not an either-or situation - - you could pick a rate between the two. I’d like to see you all except for Commissioner Jarboe in an upcoming issue of the Enterprise newspaper in the obituary column.

Ray Norris, Hollywood

No to taxes. Listen to Commissioner Jarboe's ideas about consolidating departments. The tax payers have had it. Assessments go up – taxes go up. We're pulling in our belts. The budget doesn't mean anything. Need more money? Tax the people. I'd like to see our taxes start leveling off. Thanks for your service (2 Commissioners who are leaving), but I don't think you are on the side of the tax payer. You can't keep funding things like the Wicomico Shores Golf Course and the airport - - a waste of money.

Barbara Rocello

I have been in my house for 50 years. I'm paying \$239 per month for trash pick up at two places. I have my own water and sewer. In other places this is considered in the taxes – here, we're paying it.

Wayne Abernathy, 29839 Lincoln Rd., Golden Beach

I'm retired and on a fixed income which is tied to the economy. If you want me to pay increase in taxes - - you give it to me and I'll be glad to give it back. Every state budget time they say the medical helicopters are going to stop flying. I think medical helicopters are the greatest thing in the world - - saved my life. But, every time there is a budget problem in the state, the helicopters are not going to fly and the budget still gets done and now the helicopters are going to fly. If you only have to save \$6m, I have \$2.5m for you. I would love to see the county get two more new radio towers. They should have gone in 6-8 years ago. Last year the system ran the same way and it'll run again the same this year. Apparently it has been acceptable without the two new towers. When you don't have the money, you don't spend it.

Mary Ann (inaudible), 20176 Tippet Road, Lexington Park

I checked the figures on my house and on that house that was mentioned previously. It would be a \$300 per year change for me and would be \$1200 for the other house - - \$100 vs \$96 per month. So, I don't think it's that big a deal (increase in property taxes).

Jonathan Sola, 47684 Park Hall Road

Want to reiterate the sentiments from the majority here tonight for keeping the CY. Also want to remind you that you work for us. The majority (here tonight) wants to keep the CY. If that doesn't happen, there better be a darn good reason or we'll be looking into it.

Kenneth F. Boothe, 46138 Boothe Farm Lane, Great Mills

I agree with all that has been said. I'm in favor of maintaining the CY. The amount of money involved (\$6m) when you are talking about \$200m budget, just a 2% cut would make a big difference. I don't believe you have tried hard enough. Look at the ability of people to pay unreasonable expenditures without justification. You found this surplus. You need to step back and study this budget again and try harder.

After hearing comments from all those present who wished to speak on the proposed Real Property Tax Increase, the hearing was closed at 7:50 pm.

PUBLIC HEARING ON THE RECOMMENDED FY 2010 BUDGET FOR ST. MARY'S COUNTY

The public hearing on the FY 2010 Recommended Budget was opened for public comment at 7:50 pm and moderated by John Savich, County Administrator. The following is a summary of each public comment presented (comments are not recorded verbatim).

Dr. Michael J. Martirano, Superintendent, St. Mary's County Public Schools (SMCPS) (accompanied by BOE members Cathy Allen, Marilyn Crosby, Bill Mattingly, and Mary Washington)

We recognize the fact that these are some of the worst times we have experienced in terms of the economy, but also recognize that the SMCPS system is enjoying very positive times: ranked #4 in state schools, all students made AYP, every student is achieving at the highest level possible. We have tremendous momentum, don't backslide. This is the first time in the history of SMCPS that we have been able to submit a budget less than the previous year. However, our budget is not finalized yet. Money has not settled down yet from the state and it appears we'll take additional cuts. We ask that you continue to fund at high levels and continue to be very communicative and stand side by side with us. We are all cognizant of the challenging economic times affecting our community and our state and maintaining high quality of service to our children and realizing the limited financial resources has been quite a challenge, but yet we continue to not compromise services to our classroom. We have to take care of our employees, take care of OPEB and yet able to submit a budget to you that allows us to maintain our priority - -the highest quality education possible. As you to continue to support education at high levels and continue to be very communicative with SMCPS and the BOE, we ask that you recognize when our challenges come and be willing to stand side by side with us recognizing that in order to have a high quality education system, it's going to cost money to have that. We realize we are dealing with tax payer's money and are spending it very responsibly on our children's future. I implore you to continue to stand side by side with us as we continue to meet the needs of our students and to support the education budget as fully as you can.

Pastor Marguerite Morris, P.O. Box 230, Callaway

Representing Leah's House, a shelter for women and children. There are only two agencies providing services for homeless individuals in St. Mary's County. Leah's House was the first offering structured physical shelter to homeless women and children, including victims of domestic violence. I am here before you once again for the 4th time. Somebody has to make a sacrifice for some people that are more important than ourselves. Somebody has to make a sacrifice

for people that are well worth the sacrifice. I have come to you with more than 2500 signatures of people supporting our request for funding. Tell the tax payers why their tax dollars are not good enough for the homeless at Leah's House? We have provided 6,000 safe bed nights which equates to 84 cents per bed night that you have given us. We are asking for equal opportunity and equal treatment. How do you see fit that you gave \$130,000 to another shelter. How do you see fit that a \$280,000 pass through grant came to you and was given to another shelter. How do you see fit that \$35,000 was given to another shelter to seek a new home which they never found. Is it because of the color of my skin that the women and children in St. Mary's County are not afforded equal opportunity and equal access? Are the homeless that come to our door less homeless, less needy, less worth your county taxes? Can we add some equality to our budget?

Alan Dillingham (President, Library Board of Trustees), 22929 Hollyhock Lane, Leonardtown

Speaking on behalf of the Library Board and the employees. This spring, the Library Board voted unanimously for a new 40,000 sq. ft. library facility to be built on the Hayden farm property recently acquired by the county. Consequently, the Library Board requests that you change the capital improvement project for the Leonardtown Library from a renovation/expansion project to a new construction project. We are also requesting a shift of the library construction funding currently in the FY 2012 capital budget to FY 2011 capital budget. We will need 50% matching from the county to apply for 2011 state funds. Deadline is June 1, 2009. We want to thank the departments for all the ways they have supported the library this year and thank the Commissioners for the \$60,000 increase in our operating budget for 2010. Thank you for your continued support of library.

Janice Hummel, 24940 Gallant Man Dr., Hollywood

I worked at the Lexington Park Library when it was decided to build a new library. Have seen the many benefits to the community. Wonderful asset. Please build a new Leonardtown Library.

Jan Emerson, 45509 Poplar Lane, Lexington Park

Teacher, taxpayer, lifetime member of the Education Association of St. Mary's County. I have heard the phrase for 45 years: "do more with less." Each year, I fear to hear "you've done so well with less, now we'd like you to do everything with nothing." You continue to hold an undesignated general fund reserve and a rainy day fund in amounts that boggle the mind. Even 10% would make a huge difference. It's raining outside. Get real, spend more money and some on our future - - our children and grandchildren.

Anne Saunders, 22590 Gregory Dr., P.O. Box 1302, Leonardtown

It's very necessary to have a new Leonardtown Library. I rely on social security and can't afford a computer or the internet. I rely on the library very much. It's often very crowded and computers are not available. I love the children's

programs, but there is not enough space for them - - the children and parents spill out into the hallways. There could be good functions for the old (current) library building - - such as a senior center. The Library is the lifeblood of our community.

Dawn Pipkin, P.O. Box 476, Hollywood

As an educator, I respect the time and energy it takes to prepare the budget. We have all heard the dire headlines about the state of our economy. However, as citizens of St. Mary's County, we have a responsibility to our children and the future of our community. It always troubles me that I have to advocate for what I find to be an obvious priority -- the education of our children. I urge you to put our children's future first.

Anna Laughlin, Lusby, MD (Representing Education Association of St. Mary's County.

I have been teaching in St. Mary's County for 21 years. The BOE has done a great job of cutting their budget, but they didn't tell you what we'll lose. Dr. Martirano has used his fund balance to balance the budget. The county has been funding less and less of a percentage for education over the last 20 years. I am buying materials with my own money, the computers are too old, we can't afford new programs, special needs programs need more money, furniture is in a deplorable condition. I'm volunteering my time for theater arts program and do after school tutoring on my own time. I'm the rule (not the exception). Taxes are not meant to sit and collect interest, but to benefit those who live here.

Alice Willingham, 9250 Pkwy. Sub., La Plata, MD

I am a teacher in St. Mary's County, but recently my family moved to Charles County. Charles County spends almost 50% of their budget on education, while in St. Mary's it's only 40%. In past years, this Board has under estimated revenues and over estimated expenses and added to rainy day fund. Invest in our most precious resource - - children.

Sheriff Tim Cameron, Leonardtown

We have made a significant impact. Overall, crime has been reduced while demand for services continues to increase each year. We need to be prepared for the crime threat of tomorrow. We have asked you to consider supporting the following: hiring deputy sheriffs under COPS stimulus program, Cadets initiative, converting two temporary, part-time to full-time employees. We acknowledge economic conditions and ask the Board to acknowledge our effort and commitment to lessening this budget. We were asked to submit a budget that was no more than 5% over last year. Initially we submitted 5.8%; right now we are at a 3.8% budget request. We returned \$400,000 to the general fund in 2007 and just under \$200,000 in 2008. We anticipate returning funds to the general fund in the current budget year. Why? Because we want to be good stewards of the tax payers money.

Liz Purcell Leskinen, 43223 Fairgrounds Rd., Leonardtown (MD State Teachers Association)

I could give the same comments tonight that were given in 1972. The BOE and Dr. Martirano were forced to submit a pre-FY 2008 budget. At the least, it will dramatically limit opportunities for our children. At the worst, it will turn back the clock. We can do more. Thanks for keeping the county fiscally safe and using the undesignated fund balance to get our citizens through this economic down turn. Also, we entrust you to know the value of a child's future. If FY 09 expenses and revenues are more favorable than predicted, further increasing the general fund balance, we ask you to consider supplemental school funding.

Paul Kelley, 41885 Medley's Neck, Leonardtown

I'm in favor of a new library facility in Leonardtown and opposed to renovating the existing one - - it is a 60 year-old base structure. Suggest we build new one on Hayden property. Take into account the recommendations of the American Library Association, Board of Trustees and public input. The improvements are appreciated.

Doug Medley, Hollywood

There are many reasons a new library is needed. Would like to see a café like they have at the Lexington Park Library. Larger restrooms, a separate area for kids, and more parking are needed. In the current economy, a library is even more important.

Wanda R. Twigg, Mechanicsville (President, Education Association of St. Mary's County)

Thank you for funding the school system's budget and for the open communications. We are looking to you for greater help. We offer you one of our umbrellas to remind you of our mission. We ask you to significantly increase your contribution. The state has increased theirs, but St. Mary's County's contribution has decreased to 40%. While you have provided more dollars, the percentage of the budget is less. This is disturbing. This trend should not be allowed to continue. If the school system was funded at 50%, like in 1996, we would have \$100m next year, instead of \$80m. The state spent \$6,598 per student in 09; St. Mary's County spent \$4,980. The federal government contributes less than \$1,000. We are the 4th ranked educational system in the state and the 18th in spending per pupil.

Cindy Jones, 46241 Usher Lane, Valley Lee

Some people have been forgotten tonight -- people on the margin, those barely able to make ends meet. They can't afford to pay more property taxes. This budget is not acceptable. Ask that you go back to the department heads and ask them to come up with a budget 5% under last year's. Be wise stewards of tax dollars.

Joe Shade, President, CEASMC

Have worked for SMCPS for 40 years. Our students deserve the best. We request that you fully fund SMCPS budget. Please don't turn back the clock.

Courtney Dowling, MD State Teachers Association, Uniserve Director

Funds are not enough. To maintain our current status, you need to tap into rainy day fund and provide what the children deserve -- fund and then fund some more.

Terri Griest, 22015 Clipper Drive, Great Mills

I have two children with special needs. The goal is for them to become productive members of the community. Dr. Martirano recognizes that one size doesn't fit all. He had to make many budget cuts that included programs for special needs kids that need to be funded. If you have already decided to fully fund the SMCPS system at current levels or higher, thank you. If changes are made, we will need you to fully fund SMCPS.

Gregg Kolarik, 18363 Herring Creek Rd., Tall Timbers

One cut you could make in the budget is the Wicomico Shores Golf Course - \$200,000. I do play golf, but I don't think everyone should have to pay for the golf course.

Tracey Chandler, 20953 Pintail Ct., Callaway

I want to echo sentiments expressed by Terri Griest regarding special needs programs. There are no gifted and talented programs for elementary school. There are so many kids out there like my son whose potential is amazing. Many are being warehoused. I see the commitment, but it also takes money. The BOE had to submit a bare bones budget that is lacking in services for all of our children. We have done well, but how long can we continue. I have heard that people with special needs children who are thinking of moving here have been told by their doctors not to move to St. Mary's County because the services aren't here for their children.

Mary G. Bailey, Hollywood Road, Leonardtown

I'm looking at the capital budget for next five years . . . the last time I was here I was trying to get an ice skating rink. I don't see anything in the budget - - not even for a feasibility study. A skating rink will pay for itself. And, even if it doesn't, there are other things in St. Mary's County that don't pay for themselves.

Steve Willing, Denton Circle, Lexington Park

I would like definition of line items from the education people - - particularly \$2.6m.

Mr. Savich responded that questions can be put to the BOE off-line.

Marilyn Crosby, 46285 Cecil Road, Lexington Park (BOE member)

I'm supporting what has been said already. We want your support to sustain our progress. Thank you for not making us take maintenance of effort. There will be no furloughs in St. Mary's County. Thank you for your support.

Shelby Guazzo, Willow Glen Lane, Chaptico

Do not allow history to repeat itself. 15 years ago, the Lexington Park Library first made it to the capital improvements budget. It then spent 12 years in year six. We need to double the size of the Leonardtown Library now. We don't need to wait 10 or 15 years. The library serves all in this county - - every condition of people. I want to quote from the library's bookmark, "ranked 5th in circulation in the state." Regarding current enrollments for St. Mary's County elementary schools - - this year we lost 60 students compared to last year. With a new school we will have 600 new seats to fill. I suggest the proposed school on the Hayden property be put in another box on your six year plan and that you move up the Leonardtown Library. We have enough school seats for another year or two.

Coleman Hillman, Mechanicsville

You have my permission to increase my taxes. I enjoy using all three of the libraries. I can tell you it is a very diverse group. Please stay on top of the libraries. Also request that you maintain county vehicles - - many need new tires -- and repair potholes on 236.

After hearing comments from all those present who wished to speak, the hearing was closed and the meeting of the Board of County Commissioners adjourned at 9:04 pm.

Minutes Approved by the Board of County Commissioners on _____

Betty Jean Pasko, Sr. Admin. Coordinator (Recorder)

Donna Gebicke, Admin. Asst. (Recorder)